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### Increasing Employment Success: Helping Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities at Friends Life Improve Job Readiness Skills

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# Increasing Employment Success: Helping Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities at Friends Life Improve Job Readiness skills

By: Madeleine Ruff, OTD/S



## "Everyone Deserves a Place to Belong"

### Agency: Friends Life

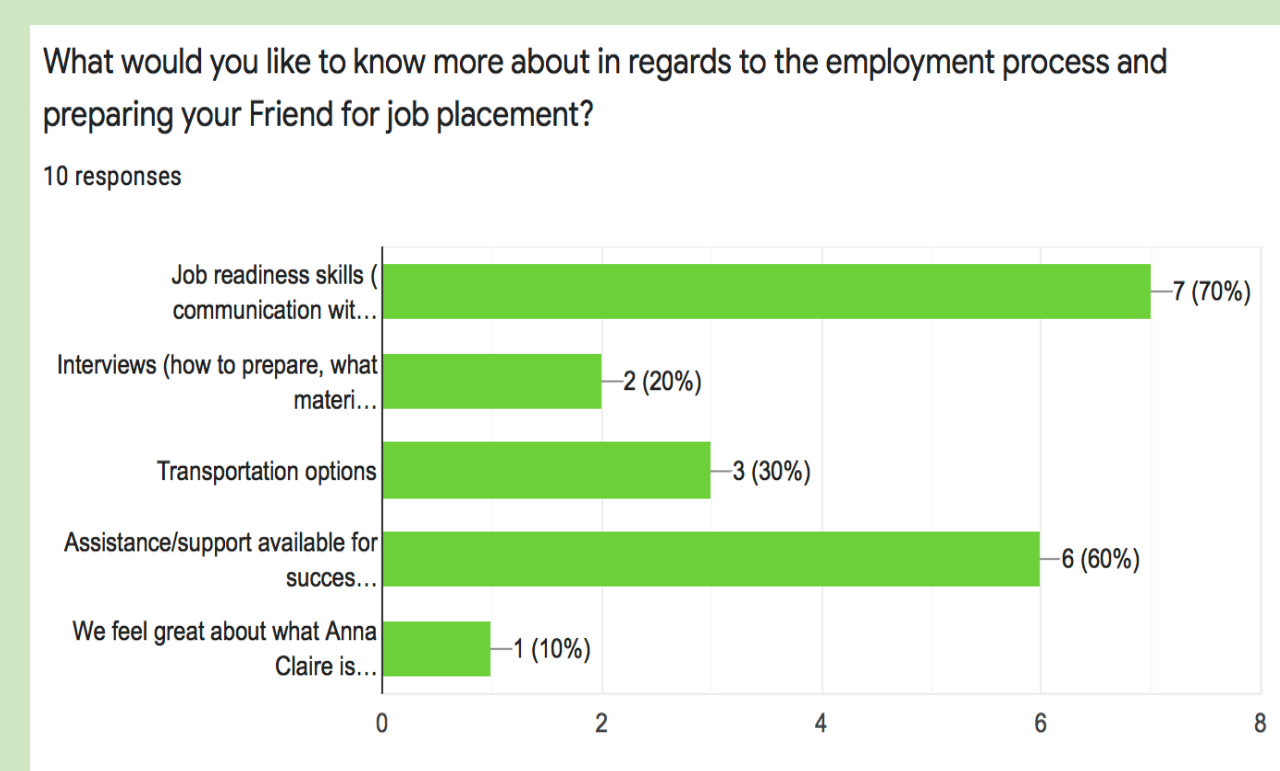
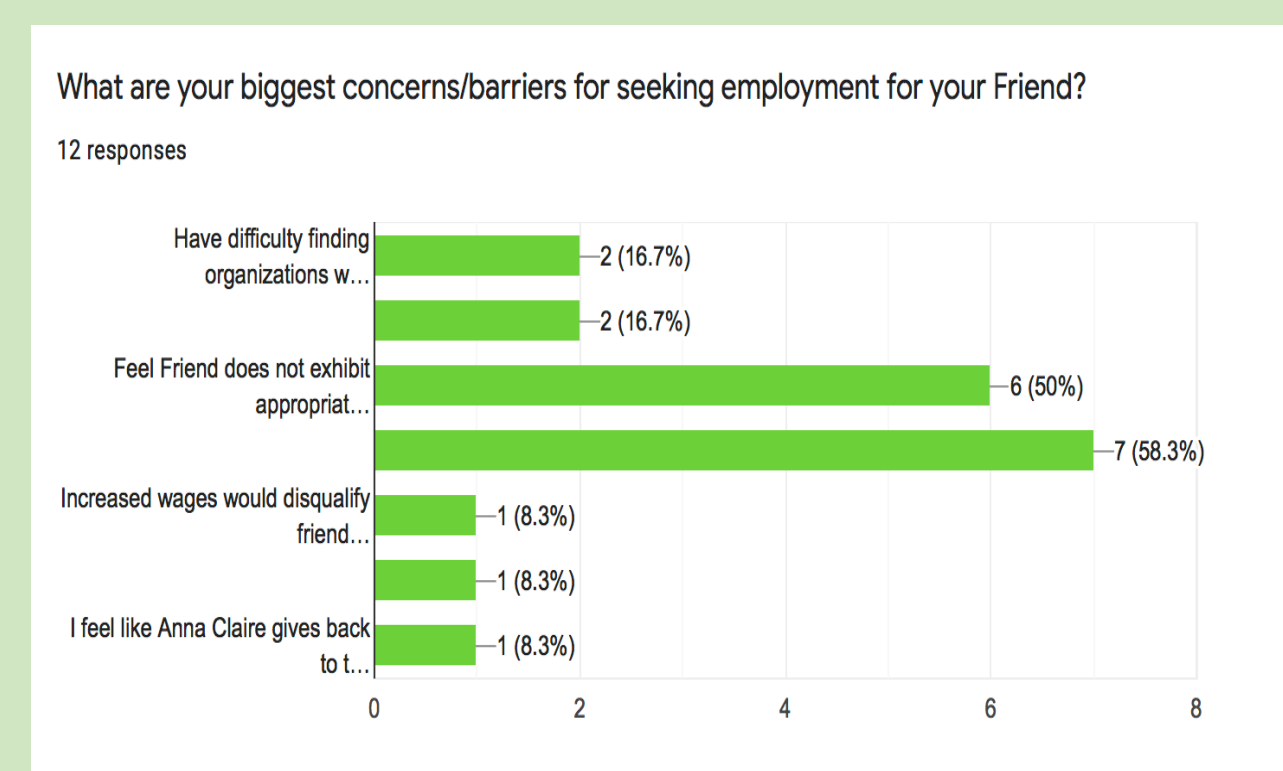
Friends Life Community is a day habilitation program created to advocate for families with adult children with developmental disabilities.

Its program creates an opportunity for this population to develop socially, grow personally, and enjoy community through participation in advocacy though the arts, service learning & employment and life skills.

### Literature Review

- Based on the literature, concerns employers have with hiring individuals with disabilities include:
- Belief they are not able to reach the level of professional development that their peers without disabilities display (Baker, Linden, LaForce, Rutledge & Goughnour, 2018)
- Lack of positions with a good fit
- Need for extra supervision/training in safety
- Decreased productivity levels, (Parrey, D., Davis, E., Lykins, L., Johnson, P., & Riehle, E., 2014)

### Identified Needs



A survey was conducted to determine caregiver concerns related to employment preparedness:

- Out of a total of 14 responses, 8 were interested in learning more about employment and obtaining employment for their Friend.
- 50% of caregivers reported their biggest concern was that Friend does not exhibit appropriate professional behaviors/social skills necessary for successful employment within the community
- 70% of caregiver responses indicated that they would like to learn more about Job readiness skills (communication with co-workers, problem solving, listening, time-management, coping skills) in order to prepare Friend for job placement

### Goals

The goals of this experiential component were to:

- Capitalize on studies that identify the benefits Individuals with IDD can bring into the workplace
- Develop a curriculum focused on development of foundational soft skills required on job site
- Design activities that stimulate interest and participation with Friends to increase understanding of expected professional behaviors
- Develop vision statements tailored to each individual to improve employer's expectations and accentuate Friend's specific strengths and qualities



### Vision Statements

**Vision Statement Definition:** Document showcasing Friend's strengths, weaknesses, values, goals and beliefs. Provides summary of Friend's professional work and volunteer experiences with a direct statement of where each Friend sees them self in the future.

**Vision Statement components:**

- What works for me
- Strengths
- What does not work
- Things that I Love
- What I Am Working On



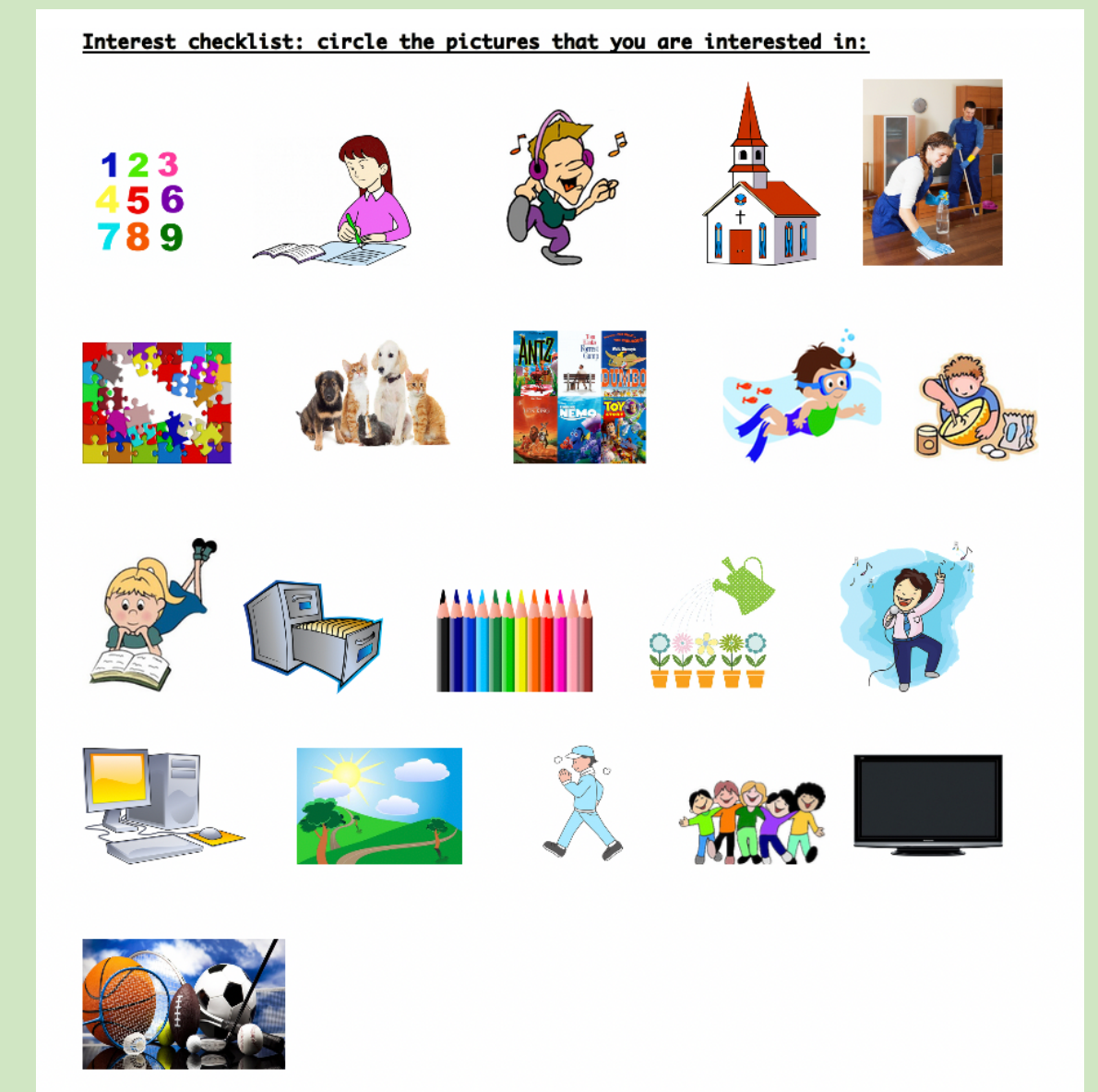
### Job Readiness Curriculum

#### Section 1: Job Exploration

Includes activities to help Friends identify strengths, weaknesses, skills, preferences, interests & habits.

**Includes:**

- Modified interest checklists
- Identifying employment work site worksheets
- Links to videos with employees performing specific job tasks



#### Section 2: Preparing for a Job

Covers key foundational skills to support transition into workplace and facilitate appropriate professional behavior.

**Includes:**

- Worksheets for building vision statements/resumes
- Activities addressing appropriate interview attire
- Role-playing interview cards

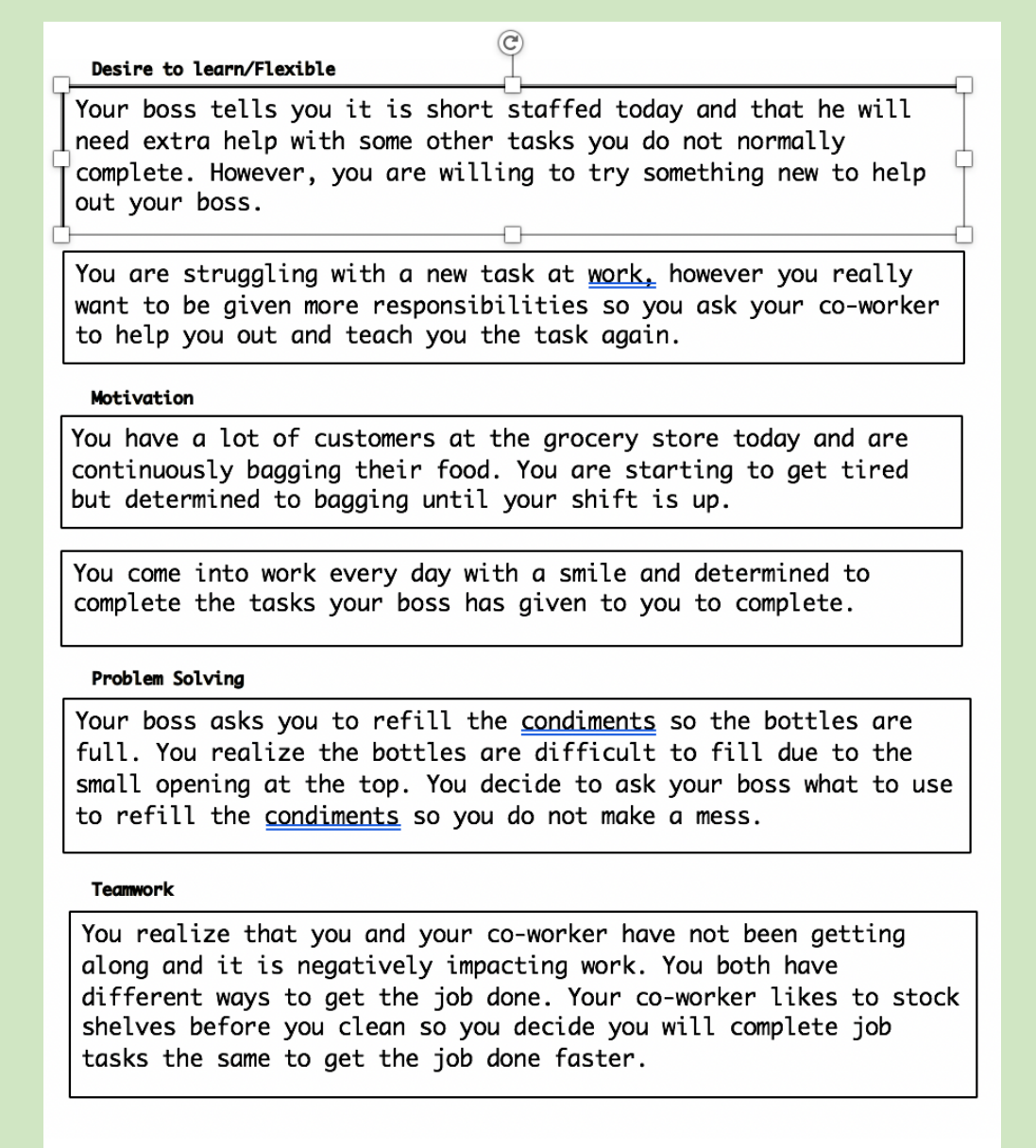


#### Section 3: Maintaining Employment:

Provides tips and resources to continue to support Friends during employment.

**Includes:**

- Soft skills worksheets
- Developing communication stories
- Discussion topics for Friends to remember after obtaining job placement



### Acknowledgments

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